

§ 32.9

(c)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, when a debtor's pay is subject to multiple withholding orders, unless otherwise provided by Federal law, withholding orders issued pursuant to this part shall have priority over other withholding orders that are served later in time.

(2) Notwithstanding the foregoing, withholding orders for family support shall have priority over withholding orders issued under this part.

(3) If amounts are being withheld from a debtor's pay pursuant to a withholding order served on an employer before a withholding order issued pursuant to this part, or if a withholding order for family support is served on an employer at any time, the amounts withheld pursuant to a withholding order issued under this part shall be the lesser of:

(i) The amount calculated under paragraph (b) of this section, or

(ii) An amount equal to 25% of the debtor's disposable pay less the amount(s) withheld under the withholding order(s) with priority.

(d) If the debtor owes more than one debt to the Department, the Secretary may issue multiple withholding orders provided that the total amount garnished from the debtor's pay for such orders does not exceed the amount set forth in paragraph (b) of this section.

(e) An amount greater than that set forth in paragraphs (b) or (c) of this section may be withheld upon the written consent of the debtor.

(f) The employer shall promptly pay to the Department all amounts withheld in accordance with the withholding order issued pursuant to this part.

(g) The employer is not required to vary its normal pay and disbursement cycles in order to comply with the withholding order.

(h) Any assignment or allotment by an employee shall be void to the extent it interferes with or prohibits execution of the withholding order issued under this part, except for any assignment or allotment made pursuant to a family support judgment or order.

(i) The employer shall withhold the appropriate amount from the debtor's wages for each pay period until the employer receives notification from the

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Secretary to discontinue wage withholding.

(j) The withholding order, SF-329B "Wage Garnishment Order," sent to the employer under § 32.6, requires the employer to commence wage withholding on the first pay day after the employer receives the order. However, if the first pay day is within 10 days after receipt of the order, the employer may begin deductions on the second pay day.

(k) An employer may not discharge, refuse to employ, or take disciplinary action against any debtor as a result of the issuance of a withholding order under this part.

[68 FR 15093, Mar. 28, 2003; 68 FR 24052, May 6, 2003]

§ 32.9 Financial hardship.

(a) A debtor whose wages are subject to a withholding order may, at any time, request a review by the Department of the amount garnished, based on materially changed circumstances such as disability, divorce, or catastrophic illness which result in financial hardship.

(b) A debtor requesting such a review under paragraph (a) of this section shall submit the basis for claiming that the current amount of garnishment results in a financial hardship to the debtor, along with supporting documentation. The Secretary shall consider any information submitted in accordance with this part.

(c) If a financial hardship is found, the Secretary shall downwardly adjust, by an amount and for a period of time established by the Secretary, the amount garnished to reflect the debtor's financial condition. The Secretary will notify the employer of any adjustments to the amount to be withheld.

§ 32.10 Refunds.

(a) If the hearing official, pursuant to a hearing under this part, determines that a debt is not legally due and owing to the United States, the Secretary shall promptly refund any amount collected by means of administrative wage garnishment.

(b) Unless required by Federal law or contract, refunds under this part shall not bear interest.